

Remarks

This Amendment is filed in response to the Office Action dated December 18, 2002, which was paper no. 15 of the present application. Claims 1-21, 31, 33-37 and 43-97 were previously canceled without prejudice. Claims 22-26, 38, 98-105 and 132 have also been canceled without prejudice in this paper. Claims 27, 32, 39, 108, 119-120, 122, 126, 128 and 133-135 have been amended, and new claims 136-176 have been added. Claims 27-30, 32, 39-42, 106-131, and 133-176 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 106-113 have been allowed and that claims 27-30, 39-42, and 115-118 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The Examiner provided a statement of reasons for allowable subject matter. Applicant notes that the claims are directed to various combinations of features. It is respectfully submitted that the patentability of each of the allowed and allowable claims resides in the combination of features recited in that claim in addition to any features noted by the Examiner.

Applicant has rewritten claim 27 in independent form. Claims 28-30 depend from claim 27. Claim 39 has been rewritten in independent form. Claim 40 depends from claim 39, claim 41 depends from claim 40, and claim 42 depends from claim 41. Claims 115-118 depend from claim 114, and are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 114 as discussed below.

Claims 22-26, 32, 38, 98-105, 114, 119-124, 127-130, 132 and 133 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,270,582 to Rivkin et al. ("Rivkin"). Applicant notes that the Examiner indicated in the Detailed Action on page 2 of the Office Action that claim 48 was rejected. Applicant assumes that the Examiner intended to indicate claim 38, as claim 48 was previously canceled without prejudice and claim 38 was indicated as being rejected on the Office Action Summary page. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 22-26, 38, 98-105 and 132 have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecute these claims at a later date.

Claim 32 has been amended to depend from claim 27, which was indicated as being allowed by the Examiner.

Regarding claim 114, applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner cited no portion of Rivkin that describes or suggests the combination of elements such as the lower plate, supports and cooling plate recited in claim 114. For example, The Examiner cited no specific portion of Rivkin that describes or suggests the "cooling plate including a plurality of apertures therethrough that are sized to accept said supports" as recited in claim 114. Accordingly, for at

least the above reason, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 114 and its dependent claim 119 should be withdrawn. Applicant also notes that the Examiner cited no portion of Rivkin that describes or suggests that the "elevator is positioned below said lower plate" as recited in claim 119.

Regarding claim 120, applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner cited no portion of Rivkin that describes or suggests the combination of elements such as the upper support structure, lower support structure, cooling plate and elevator as recited in claim 120. For example, the Examiner cited no specific portion of Rivkin that describes "a cooling plate having an upper surface positioned between said lower support structure and upper support structure in said loadlock chamber when a substrate is positioned on said cooling plate upper surface; and an elevator positioned below said lower support structure" as recited in claim 120. Accordingly, for at least the above reason, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 120 and its dependent claims 121-124 and 127 should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claim 128 and its dependent claims 129-130 and 133 (amended to depend from claim 128) should be withdrawn for at least similar reasons as claim 120.

Claims 125-126 and 134 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Rivkin. Claim 131 was rejected over 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Rivkin in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,944,857 to Edwards et al. The rejections are respectfully traversed. Claim 125-126 are patentable over Rivkin for at least the same reasons as claim 120, from which they depend. Claim 131 is patentable over the art for at least the same reasons as claim 128, from which it depends. The Examiner cited no portion of Edwards that overcomes the deficiencies of Rivkin as described above. Claim 134 is patentable over Rivkin for at least the same reason as claim 128, from which it depends.

The Office Action also included various comments concerning the art and the non-patentability of features in various of the pending claims. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's non-patentability conclusions. Applicant also notes that the Examiner appeared to cite several aspects from different embodiments of Rivkin without providing an explanation of why or how they relate to each other. For example, in number 2 of the Detailed Action, on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner cited Fig. 4 of Rivkin in the rejection. However, in the second paragraph on page 3 (still part of number 2 of the Detailed Action), the Examiner describes features from the embodiment shown in Fig. 3. The Examiner's comments that have not been specifically discussed above are deemed moot at this time in view of this response.

New claims 136-176 have been added. Support for the new claims may be found throughout the specification, figures and original claims. It is believed that no new matter has been entered. Examination of the claims is respectfully requested.

In view of all of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested and allowance at an early date is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on June 18, 2003.

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